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UNITED STATES PATENT APPLICATION

FOR

AN APPARATUS FOR HOLDING BAGS

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APPARATUS FOR HOLDING BAGS

BACKGROUND

[0001] Bags with handles are becoming a popular means for people to carry goods. Many markets, for example, generally offer plastic bags to customers for carrying groceries. These plastic bags include integral handles that allow customers to carry the bags by the handle. Often, however, these bags filled with goods are often cumbersome to carry even over short distances. U.S. Patent No. 423,348 describes a bag holder to aid in hand-carrying one or more bags.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0002] The invention is illustrated by way of example and not by way of limitation in the figures of the accompanying drawings in which like references indicate similar elements. It should be noted that references to "an" or "one" embodiment in this disclosure are not necessarily to the same embodiment, and such references mean at least one.

[0003] **Figure 1** is a front side view of one embodiment of the bag holder, the rear elevational view being a mirror image of the front view.

[0004] **Figure 2** is a left side elevational view of one embodiment of the bag holder.

[0005] **Figure 3** is a right side elevational view of one embodiment of the bag holder.

[0006] **Figure 4** is a diagrammatic perspective view of one embodiment of the bag holder in full lines with a bag shown in broken lines representing environmental association matter for illustrative purposes.

[0007] **Figure 5** is a diagrammatic perspective view of one embodiment of the bag holder positioned at an angle in full lines with a bag shown in broken lines representing environmental association matter for illustrative purposes.

[0008] **Figure 6** is a front side view of another embodiment of the bag holder showing a round-edged hook, the rear elevational view being a mirror image of the front view.

[0009] **Figure 7** is a front side view of still another embodiment of a bag holder having a supplemental handle portion on the handle member.

[0010] **Figure 8** shows a right side view of the embodiment of **Figure 7**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0011] **Figures 1-3** illustrate an embodiment of an apparatus suitable as a bag holder. **Figure 1** is a front side view of one embodiment, the rear side view being a mirror image of the front view. **Figure 2** is a left side view and **Figure 3** is a right side view. In one embodiment, apparatus 10 comprises handle member 100 which has opening 105 making the handle member 100 suitable for grasping with the fingers of a human hand. In this embodiment, handle member 100 has a generally pentagonal-shaped body (as viewed in **Figure 3**) with base 102A representing one side, two vertical side portions 102B and 102C, two diagonal portions 102D and 102E, and apex 103 (the base and apex inverted relative to **Figures 1-3**). Opening 105 generally follows the pentagonal shape of the body of handle member 105. Finger undulations 104 (spaced appropriately for fingers on an average human adult) are disposed on an inferior side (as viewed) of base 102A within opening 105. Apparatus 10 may be grasped (gripped) by the fingers of a human hand (e.g., within the clutch of four fingers) through opening 105 and about base 102A.

[0012] Apparatus 10 further includes cantilever portion 110 having a base end and a free end. Base end 108 is coupled to handle member 100 at about apex

103. Free end 109 of cantilever portion 110 extends at an angle, α , of on the order of 0 to 20 degrees relative to an inferior portion (as viewed) of one diagonal portion (e.g., diagonal portion 102E in **Figure 3**) of handle member 100, and at a distance from the interior portion of the diagonal portion. In this manner, slot 114 is formed between handle member 100 and cantilever portion 110. Still further, a base of slot 114, in one embodiment, defines circular well 120.

[0013] Apparatus 10 also include hook 115 coupled to a superior surface (as viewed) of cantilever portion 110 so as to be disposed in slot 114. In the embodiment shown in **Figure 1**, hook 115 is disposed between circular well 120 and free end 109 of cantilever portion 110.

[0014] In this embodiment, one edge of hook 115 adapts an arc shape defining circular well 120. In one embodiment, the components of apparatus 10 described above (e.g., handle member 100, cantilever portion 110, and hook 115) are formed as one integral piece by, for example, a light plastic material formed in a mold to the shape illustrated.

[0015] In one embodiment, bag handles such as a pair of handles of one or more plastic groceries bags, may be positioned on apparatus 10 by maneuvering a pair of handles through slot 114, beyond hook 115 to well 120. Thus, a bag or multiple bags can be carried in a generally more comfortable manner by apparatus 10.

[0016] Often shoppers or consumers carry bags intermittently between the time they receive the bags of, for example, groceries at a supermarket, and the time they deliver the bags to their destination, for example, a residential kitchen. Shoppers may carry bags, for example, from the supermarket to their car, place the groceries in the trunk of their car, drive the car to their residence, and retrieve the bags from their car and take them into their residence. One concern with utilizing the convenience of a bag holder to transport the bags is that the bags are not retained by the bag holder when the bags are not being carried prior to their final destination.

[0017] Apparatus 10 minimizes the possibility of bags (e.g., bag handles of bags) thus inserted into or on apparatus 10 from sliding off of cantilever portion 110. In one embodiment, hook 115 minimizes this possibility by partially blocking slot 114. In the embodiment shown in **Figure 3**, hook 115 has an edge conforming to the shape of well 120 to block a portion of slot 114. In another embodiment, hook 115 partially blocks slot 114.

[0018] **Figures 4-5** present a diagrammatic perspective view of one embodiment of the bag holder in full lines with a bag shown in broken lines representing environmental association matter for illustrative purposes only and forming no part of the claimed invention. **Figure 4** illustrates the bag holder carrying a bag. The bag handles are fed through the slot formed between handle member 100 and cantilever portion 110. Hook 115 minimizes the opportunity for bag handles to slide out of well 120 and off of the cantilever portion 110. **Figure 5** illustrates that even when the bag holder is released from the grasp of a human hand and therefore not using the weight of the bags to stay in slot 115, hook 115 keeps bags from sliding off of the cantilever portion 110.

[0019] **Figure 6** is a front side view of another embodiment of an apparatus including a round-edged hook 120 (rounded at its superior edge (as viewed) adjacent the well).

[0020] **Figures 7 and 8** show another embodiment of apparatus 10. In this embodiment, apparatus 10 includes supplemental handle 135 coupled to the handle member. Supplemental handle 135 may be of a soft or giving material like a soft foamed or non-foamed polymer (e.g., synthetic rubber, neoprene, etc.) to provide a cushion to the hand of an individual carrying the apparatus. Supplemental handle 135 may be separately detachable to apparatus 10 with the other components formed as an integral unit.

[0021] In the preceding detailed description, the invention is described with reference to specific embodiments thereof. It will, however, be evident that various modifications and changes may be made thereto without departing from the broader spirit and scope of the invention as set forth in the claims. The

specification and drawings are, accordingly, to be regarded in an illustrative rather than a restrictive sense.